

Some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “Go away, leave this area because Herod wants to kill you” (13:31). Jesus is often at odds with the Pharisees, so it is good to see that a few are trying to be helpful. Jesus stays the course and continues to serve despite the personal threats to his safety. He also has a keen sense that he will offer his life in Jerusalem when the time is right.

Jesus determination to stay in harm’s way matches the heroic efforts of many on the forefront of offering healthcare during this pandemic. With over 44 million global cases and nearly 1.2 million deaths, there are countless quiet heroes who make the daily sacrifice to offer care while putting themselves at risk each day. Thankfully, safety protocols of washing hands frequently, wearing masks, disinfecting surfaces and social distancing are effective. And in the case of health care workers who must come closer than 6 feet, they take extra precautions and wear additional personal protective equipment. I would encourage everyone to pray not only for those who have contracted the virus but also for all who offer medical care to those most in need.

Beyond doctors and nurses and those who test for the virus, ordinary people in all walks of life are making daily sacrifices to provide essential services.

- The mail carrier’s appointed rounds bring him to hundreds of homes or businesses each day in the city. In smaller communities, the clerk at the post office is in contact with every person in the village. Virus or no virus, an inscriptionⁱ on the old post office in Washington DC speaks about the postal worker and also highlights how interconnected we are:

Messenger of Sympathy and Love ... Servant of Parted Friends
Consoler of the Lonely ... Bond of the Scattered Family
Enlarger of the Common Life ... Carrier of News and Knowledge
Instrument of Trade and Industry ... Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance
Of Peace and of Goodwill Among Men and Nations.

The more we recognize our common interest, the more we will sacrifice to help others.

- The clerk in the store where we buy our groceries is another unsung hero who is on the forefront of service amidst the pandemic. One union source noted 82 grocery store workers have died from COVID-19 and 11,507 have been infected or exposed to the virus in the first 100 days of the outbreak.ⁱⁱ
- Teachers, educators, and school support staff have always worked long hours to educate. As with almost every job you can think of, their service is even more complicated trying to work to keep the schools safe and to find new ways of teaching remotely.

Saint Paul advises us to “draw your strength from the Lord and from his mighty power. Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the Devil” (Eph 6:10-11). Jesus drew strength and focus and direction from his Father. We need to be wise enough to know we cannot do it all by ourselves. We need to stay close to God drawing upon his strength to resist all of the temptations upon us during this pandemic:

- Lord train our hands for battle and our fingers for war against all of the temptations to be selfish so that we may be self-sacrificing.
- Our mercy and our fortress, our stronghold, our deliverer, help us to treat others with respect and dignity even when we are tired and angry and upset.
- You who give victory to kings, and deliver David, your servant from the evil sword, deliver us from the evil of this virus that we may reach out to serve our brothers and sisters in need.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱ about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/mission-motto.pdf

ⁱⁱ supermarketnews.com/issues-trends/ufcw-over-11500-grocery-workers-affected-first-100-days-pandemic

ⁱⁱⁱ Paraphrasing Ps 144